

The Negro in Business

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intend that we should all administer to the soul of each other alone; he planned that some of us should administer to the soles of our feet. To-day I am here as an exponent or a disciple for the care of the soles of the feet. We have been teaching the Negro of the things unseen, and preparing him for eternity, but now we must teach him of the things seen and make him ready to live.

"The particular pursuits that I wish to direct your attention to is that of the shoe business, unlike most of the commercial business. One might think that to undertake such, means a large capital, as well as long years of experience in handling shoes, before success can be assured. I have only to relate

talk over the meritorious points of a shoe. The average size of a man's foot, and women likewise, and what grades of shoes would be most suitable for Southern trades. It was more than one week spent in the accumulation of this knowledge, when we went to one of the biggest and richest concerns in the city of Boston to place our order for about fifty styles, all in the lowest and middle grades of shoes. We reached Charleston, everybody anxiously awaiting the opening of this Negro shoe store.

"The idea of a general house to house canvass over the city presented itself. With the drummer idea we carried samples from house to house, exhorting each Negro to give us a trial—showing them the advantage as well as the quality of our goods, placing our profits on close marginal lines, and

these are concerns that were established immediately after slavery, handling such commodities as the whites thought too degrading for them to handle. These Negroes have made money in their fields of business of the large patronage of the whites. Because of such successful career, to-day finds the whites going into the avenues and helping to awaken the once powerful influence of the Negro, by gaining the patronage of the whites, who once sought the Negroes for these commodities. There has scarcely been a day past in the history of our business without the attempt to sell to some white customers. In some cases we are turned down because of our color, while others come in and inquire as to who carries on the business, and make purchases, after which they express themselves as being willing to trade with any one who gives them values, regardless of color. We note that whenever we place bargains in our windows the white people take advantage and buy them up before the Negro customers get around. If you are cheap they lose sight of your color. They want the best goods for the smallest amount. I feel that where it shall become a custom for the Negro to engage in all mercantile pursuits the whites and blacks alike flock to him.

"The white shoe dealers have been no barrier to us; rather a help. They come around us and counsel with us as to the form and best method of handling our trade. In case we are short on sizes of a certain shoe, we can get this shoe from any white merchant with allowance of half the profit for ourselves, and so in this way we keep in touch with the leading shoe men, studying with them the greatest creator for business, which is style. It will take time and work, but it will bring reputation to business, and profit as nothing else will. It rests with you as to whether your store shall be the home of stylish shoes or whether those who wear the styles must go somewhere else to get them, and you lose the benefit and profit.

"The shoe dealer can really do missionary service. Time was, when he had one line and one last; now there are lines and lasts without number, and it is here that his skill comes in. The man with the wide crooked foot will want a narrow straight shoe. He insists that he has worn that style of shoe all his life. As an evidence of this, his foot is the proud possessor of two bunions and as many corns as there are toes. The timid dealer will yield to his whim, but the man who is in business for more than the money there is in it almost refuses to sell him a shoe that will continue a source of annoyance. He finally convinces his man, and each time has made a life-long customer. There is a hygienic value in shoes and we push it.

"Be sure that you are a strictly one-priced house. A two-priced shoe store nowadays cannot meet with success, for you must have the full confidence of your customers. It might make a few sales at first, more quickly, but it would only be a question of time when the public would find it out, and when the people find they can not trust to your honesty no longer they will look for another place to do their trading. The old maxim, 'Honesty is the best policy,' always holds good. In case a

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MR. J. PERRY SEABROOK,
A Leading Shoe Merchant, Charleston, S. C.

my few years of experience along this line to convince you that capital and years of training are not essential to a successful career in the shoe world, but that Grit, Grit and Brains stand out as the three greatest factors.

"In the city of Charleston, October 21, 1899, the firm of Seabrook and Porter, shoe dealers, was launched. The capital stock and fixtures, \$500; \$200 reserve fund. This gave us about as many pairs of shoes as we could both carry in our arms, and about as many empty shoe boxes to adorn our shelves, and thus added to make a full display of the goods.

"We spent a part of the month of September in Boston, where we received our first schooling from a Negro, who had been employed in the shoe factory as shipping clerk for several years. This man took special interest in us. Each night we would meet and

We carried out this method for about three months, when the demand for shoes exceeded the supply. By making every possible sacrifice, every available dollar had been turned into building up our stock. The empty shoe boxes had been displaced by boxes containing shoes. The little store, which was about five feet wide and fifteen feet long, was filled to its capacity. Nine months had passed, and we must launch out into deeper water, with the same old grit and determination to sink or swim. We moved into larger quarters.

"Ninety per cent of the trade carried on is with the Negro; about ten per cent with whites. To the white, as well as the colored people the fact that shoes can be bought from a Negro concern, is a new feature. There are a number of Negro businesses supported entirely by the white people. But

HOMES FOR SALE.

Nos. 635 and 637 Acker St. N. E.—7 rooms and bath; bricks; handsome fronts and cozy interiors; houses are in first-class condition, having been newly papered and painted. Price, \$2,500 each;—\$1,700 can remain for three years at 5 per cent. interest.

No. 2316 H St. N. W.—Frame cottage of 9 rooms and bath; lot 26 x 91 rented at \$25.50. Price, \$3,500.

No. 1806 Corcoran St. N. W.—8-room frame; lot 14 x 60; finest location in city. Price, \$2,150.

No. 1033 Seventeenth St. N.W.—Five room brick with frame kitchen; no bath; lot 18 x 25; next to corner of L St. and key to the improvement of same. A fine speculation. Now rented at \$20.50. Price, \$3,500.

Call and see us about terms. Other desirable terms E.T.A.O.I. SHRD.L CMF desirable properties for sale.

GEORGE Y. WORTHINGTON, or
GEORGE J. EASTERDAY,
1410 G St. N. W.

DRESS MAKING ACADEMY.

The de Lam Orton Famous French Perfection Tailor System, Mme. J. A. Smallwood, sole agent, 1513 Madison street, northwest.

Morning class from 9 a. m. to 1 p. m. Afternoon class 2 to 5 p. m. daily. Evenings from 7:30 to 10 o'clock. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, dressmakers and ladies who wish to do their own dress-making.

WANTED.—To learn the wonderful De Lam Orton French Perfection Tailor System. Seamless Basques without one inch of visible seam, in lining or goods, not even on the shoulder. Successful dressmaking requires as much earnest progressive study as successful work in any profession. No detail is too small to be looked after. We teach you to make dresses with or without seam and guarantee perfect fits, and complete your course with a diploma.

If you have a spare room that you would like rent to desirable parties, advertise them in The Colored American.

Please Help Me Find My Brother

Sauk Joyce was sold in Mecklenburg, Virginia several years before the civil war, to Cunningham a Negro trader. His mother, Willie, was a slave on the Joyce plantation. He had one sister Betty, who is very anxious to find him. Any information will be gladly received.
Mrs. BETTY REYNOLDS,
44 Parker street, Atlanta, Ga.

WANTED:—Girl for house work in suburban home with city conveniences; family of two adults; none but first-class girl wishing a good permanent home with good wages need apply. Call, or address Mrs. J. K. Gaines, Glen Echo Heights, Md., or 467 C street northwest, Washington, D. C.

AN ADVERTISING SOLICITOR WANTED.

Wanted—An active man, who understands soliciting advertising, to take a position on The Colored American. It is a good paying, permanent position for the right kind of man. Apply at this office. tf

NOTICE.

The copartnership known as Carter & Davis, doing lunch-room business at 308 Twelfth street northwest, has by mutual consent this 28th day of September, 1903, been dissolved. Will be known hereafter as G. A. Carter.